

AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

VETERANS IN BLUE



VOLUME III



Photos by Staff Sgt. David Salanitri

LEROY MANOR



BIO GRAPHY



Lieutenant General (Ret.) Leroy J. Manor flew over Normandy during D-Day and was commander of the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Force. In 1970, Manor was called upon to command the contingency task force for Operation Ivory Coast, the Son Tay raid. He was tasked with spearheading a plan to raid a camp in North Vietnam. They had two objectives: "One was to rescue, if possible, some prisoners of war (POW), but most importantly we wanted to get a message across," Manor said. "A message to all the others that we had not forgotten them." Operation Ivory Coast was conducted on November 20, 1970. The raid was successful; however, the POWs had been moved. "The results were good. The POWs were all moved to the main camps," said Manor. "North Vietnam realized we might do it again. They wouldn't know where. They wouldn't know when. That's the beauty of Special Ops." Manor was recognized by President Richard Nixon and awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for commanding the operation. During his Air Force career, Manor earned a command pilot rating with more than 6,500 flying hours, including 347 combat missions in two wars. Since retiring, Manor has acted as an advisor to the military, been president of the Retired Officers Association, lectured at staff schools and remains active in the special operations community.

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Vernon Young, Jr.

JAMES McCOY

BIO GRAPHY



Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (Ret.) James McCoy was the sixth Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force -- the highest noncommissioned officer (NCO) position in the service. During the Taiwan crisis of August 1958, he was instrumental in establishing and operating the wing command post, which coordinated all Composite Air Strike Force aircraft. He transferred to Headquarters Strategic Air Command (SAC) in June 1967, where he established the SAC NCO Academy and NCO Leadership School programs. In April 1973, McCoy was assigned as chief of the military training branch at Headquarters Pacific Air Forces where he revitalized the on-the-job training program. During this assignment in 1974, he was selected as one of the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Air Force. In 1979, he became the 6th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. During his tour as CMSAF, the Stripes for Exceptional Performers program was instituted to give incentive and an alternate promotion option to enlisted Airmen.

McCoy retired in 1981. He remains at the forefront of Air Force issues by serving in leadership positions with Air Force professional organizations and speaking to Airmen throughout the Air Force.

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Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Gary Rihn

JOHN MULZAC

BIO GRAPHY



Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) John Mulzac began his career in 1942 as one of the original Tuskegee Airmen. Joining at the age of 19, Mulzac spent the next 41 years piloting various aircraft. He served in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam. Early in his pilot training while flying solo above Birmingham, Alabama, he turned the plane over and was flying inverted. Due to the gravity-feed fuel system, the engine soon quit, and Mulzac found himself in a quiet, powerless aircraft. He discovered the controls were stuck, and the aircraft was losing altitude. Preparing to jump from his plane, Mulzac looked back to see what had happened with the tail. He saw a microphone cable in the back seat looped around the stick and pulled on it. He then kicked the rudder as hard as he could and managed to right his aircraft. After safely landing, his instructors heard what happened and told him he would go on to be a successful pilot. Mulzac retired in 1983 after completing more than 15,000 flying hours. A few years later, he became a New York City firefighter, retiring after 20 years. Mulzac said he "had been to a thousand places all over the world," but when asked about his favorite place, he said his answer is always the same. "This great country right here. It's the best in the world. Where else could I have become a lieutenant colonel flying airplanes without even finishing high school?"

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Vernon Young, Jr.

RALPH PARR



BIO GRAPHY



Colonel (Ret.) Ralph Parr began his career as part of the Army Air Forces in 1942. He is the only American pilot to receive both the Distinguished Service Cross and the Air Force Cross. During World War II, he flew the P-38 Lightning in the Philippines, and he was an F-86 pilot during the Korean War. In May 1953, Parr achieved ace status with five kills in 11 days. He achieved double ace status in July 1953 when he made 10 kills in a seven-week period during the Korean War. On June 7, he was on a fighter sweep to intercept and destroy enemy planes over North Korea. He was looking north toward China when he saw four MiG fighters firing at them. After the initial confrontation, Parr realized there were more MiGs than he'd thought. "As I closed rapidly to about 4,000 feet, I noticed there weren't two, there were four. No, there were eight. Then, off to my left, I saw eight more. Immediately, I decided to put a big notch in the MiG leader." He downed another MiG and damaged one other, adding another kill three days later. On June 18, he notched two more victories while protecting fighter bombers striking targets in North Korea, making double ace status with his 10th kill July 27. During his career, Parr flew 641 combat missions with more than 6,000 hours and earned more than 60 decorations, including a Silver Star, 10 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 41 Air Medals. Colonel Parr retired in 1976.

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael Holzworth

LOUIS ROFFMAN

BIO GRAPHY



Chief Master Sergeant (Ret.) Louis Roffman enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1936, ultimately serving in the military for more than 31 years. Roffman was a Pearl Harbor survivor, and later fought in the Battle of Midway. He was a flight engineer on B-17 bombers with the 31st Bomb Squadron. He was later stationed in Darwin, Australia, where he was wounded during a bombing mission. With the pilot killed and co-pilot severely wounded, Roffman was forced to land the plane. As a result of his heroic actions, he received a Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross. After World War II, Roffman was stationed in Japan during the Korean War, then later served with military air attachés in embassies in Africa, Egypt, Holland and Denmark.

After retiring from the military, Roffman participated for many years in the Martin Luther King High School Remembers Programs for Veterans where he was able to share his military experiences with high school students. He also faithfully attends reunions every year to reconnect with fellow veterans and their families.

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Vernon Young, Jr.

EDWARD SAYLOR

BIO GRAPHY



Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Edward Saylor joined the Army Air Corps in 1939. Following training, Saylor served as a flight engineer for the Doolittle Raiders. In February 1942, while assigned to the 89th Bomb Squadron in Columbia, South Carolina, he volunteered for a Top Secret mission, not knowing what it entailed. Saylor and the other volunteers were first sent to Florida for training, then to Alameda Naval Air Station, California, where they boarded the USS Hornet aircraft carrier destined for an unknown location. Days at sea, the men were finally notified of their mission – take off from the deck of the Hornet and bomb Tokyo, Japan. On the morning of April 18, 1942, the men of the Doolittle Raiders launched earlier than planned after being spotted by a Japanese fishing vessel. After successfully dropping their payload on a large aircraft factory and dock yard in Kobe, Japan, Saylor's crew ditched their bomber in the waters near a small Chinese island off the coast. Saylor later received a battlefield commission on March 4, 1945. His decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Force Commendation Medal (two Oak Leaf Clusters), and the Chinese Army, Navy, Air Corps Medal (Class A, 1st Grade). He retired from the Air Force October 1, 1967, after 28 years of distinguished service.

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Photo by Technical Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III

GWEN SHEPPARD

BIO GRAPHY



Captain (Ret.) Gwen Sheppard is a two-time Warrior Games athlete, competing in archery, sitting volleyball and shooting. Her 27-year military career began at the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1981 and later included stints with the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and Navy Seabees. She first injured her shoulder during physical training at the Academy and suffered other injuries while deployed to Iraq with a civil engineering unit in 2003. Following that experience, she struggled to cope with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms but her participation in the Warrior Games helped her escape isolation and better handle PTSD. "I was extremely depressed and didn't really want to come, but I committed to it, so I decided to put my best foot forward," she said. "I talked with my fellow veterans and realized, 'Dang, I'm not the only one.' It changed my life completely."

The competition and the bond she's formed with other wounded warriors inspired her to encourage others to have the same chance she had. "I feel like I'm competitive again. I'm part of the team again," Sheppard said. "I'm contributing to something that's greater than myself again."

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Vernon Young, Jr.

LEO THORSNESS

BIO GRAPHY



Colonel (Ret.) Leo K. Thorsness flew 92 Republic F-105F Wild Weasel missions and was awarded America's highest military decoration before he was shot down and taken prisoner in North Vietnam. In 1966, the air war in Southeast Asia took on a new dimension as the Soviet Union supplied the North Vietnamese with surface-to-air missiles (SAM). In October 1966, Thorsness was assigned to the 357th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Takhli, Thailand. Over a period of six months, he not only attacked anti-aircraft defenses, successfully evading 53 SAMs, but also challenged enemy MiG aircraft that patrolled the sky. On April 30, 1967, Thorsness was shot down and captured by the North Vietnamese. For almost six years, he was a prisoner of war (POW) in camps such as the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" and "Heartbreak Hotel". In 1973, upon his return home, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. Thorsness completed 23 years in the Air Force and retired as a colonel in 1973 after accumulating nearly 5,000 flying hours. Colonel Thorsness later served as a Washington State Senator from 1988 to 1992, during which time he urged the federal government to release information about 30,000 soldiers listed as either POW or missing in action in conflicts dating back to World War II. Thorsness now serves on the board of directors for the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation. He and his wife Gaylee have one daughter and live in Madison, Alabama.

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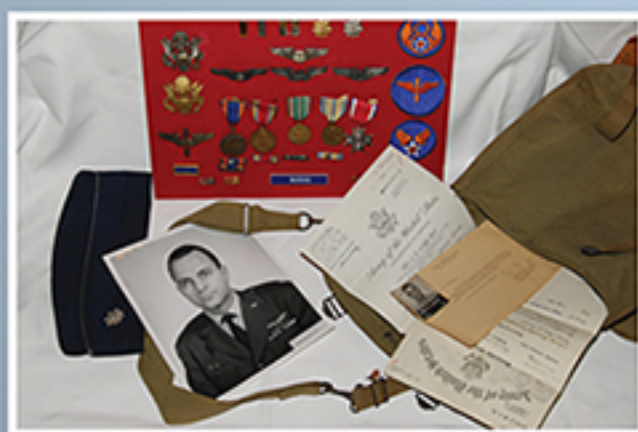


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Photos by Senior Airman Ron Dombkowski

RICHARD WARING



BIO GRAPHY



Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Richard Waring was a B-17 navigator who flew more than 35 successful bombing missions over Germany in World War II. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in February 1943, at the age of 20. After attending pre-flight, gunner and navigator school, Waring commissioned in 1944 as an aerial navigator. He served under the 487th Combat Group with the 8th Air Force in Lavenham, England. He logged more than 395 flight hours primarily in the B-17. Waring said his most memorable moment was his final operational mission in Lavenham, called the "Chow How Mission" where he scouted out locations for a food drop in Holland. "We saw the target. It was a clear, beautiful day in May. There were tulip fields in Holland at that time in bloom. And, it was magnificent to view all these tulips. As far as you could see – tulips." While flying over one of the cities, they saw "Thanks yanks" spelled out on top of the rooftops of a row of houses. "That moved us -- that they took the time to say thanks. I'll always remember that."

Waring served on active duty until 1969 when he went on retired reserve status.

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